



9110-04-P

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Coast Guard

33 CFR Part 117

[Docket No. USCG-2017-0857]

Drawbridge Operation Regulation; St. Johns River, Putnam County, FL

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DHS.

ACTION: Notice of temporary deviation from regulations; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard has issued a temporary deviation from the operating schedule that governs the Buffalo Bluff CSX Railroad Bridge across the St. Johns River, mile 94.5, at Satsuma, Putnam County, FL. This deviation will test a change to the drawbridge operation to determine whether a permanent change from manned to remote operations is feasible. This deviation will allow the bridge to operate remotely from the CSX Railroad Bridge on the Ortega River (McGirts Creek) located at mile 1.1 on the Ortega River.

DATES: This deviation is effective without actual notice from [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER] through 6 a.m. September 2, 2018. For the purposes of enforcement, actual notice will be used from April 23, 2018, until [INSERT DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER].

Comments and related materials must reach the Coast Guard on or before August 14, 2018.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments identified by docket number USCG-2017-0857 using Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

See the “Public Participation and Request for Comments” portion of the SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION section below for instructions on submitting comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: If you have questions on this test deviation, call or e-mail LT Allan Storm, Sector Jacksonville, Waterways Management Division, U.S. Coast Guard; telephone 904-714-7616, e-mail Allan.H.Storm@uscg.mil.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background, Purpose and Legal Basis

The Buffalo Bluff CSX Railroad Bridge across the St. Johns River, mile 94.5, in Satsuma, Putnam County, FL is a bascule bridge. It has a vertical clearance of 7 feet at mean high water in the closed position and a horizontal clearance of 90 feet. The bridge is currently manned and maintained in the open position. This test deviation would provide for the bridge to be remotely monitored and operated. Visual monitoring of the waterway shall be maintained with the use of cameras and the detection of vessels under the span shall be accomplished with detection sensors. Marine radio communication shall be maintained with mariners near the bridge for the safety of navigation. The remote tender may also be contacted via telephone at (386) 649-8358. The span is normally in the fully open position and will display green lights to indicate that the span is fully open. When a train approaches, the remote tender shall monitor

for vessels approaching the bridge. The remote tender shall warn approaching vessels via marine radio, channel 9 VHF of a bridge lowering. Provided the sensors do not detect a vessel under the span, the tender shall initiate the span lowering sequence, which includes the sounding of a horn and the displaying of red lights. The span will remain in the down position for a minimum of eight minutes or for the entire time the approach track circuit is occupied. After the train has cleared the bridge track circuit, the span shall open and the green lights will be displayed. This will allow vessels to pass through the bridge while taking into account the reasonable needs of other modes of transportation.

The Coast Guard will also inform the users of the waterways through our Local and Broadcast Notices to Mariners of the change in operating schedule for the bridge so that vessel operators can arrange their transits to minimize any impact caused by the temporary deviation.

In accordance with 33 CFR 117.35(e), the drawbridge must return to its regular operating schedule immediately at the end of the effective period of this temporary deviation. This deviation from the operating regulations is authorized under 33 CFR 117.35.

II. Public Participation and Request for Comments

We view public participation as essential to effective rulemaking, and will consider all comments and material received during the comment period. Your comment can help shape the outcome of this rulemaking. If you submit a comment, please include the docket number for this rulemaking, indicate the

specific section of this document to which each comment applies, and provide a reason for each suggestion or recommendation.

We encourage you to submit comments through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <http://www.regulations.gov>. If your material cannot be submitted using <http://www.regulations.gov>, contact the person in the FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT section of this document for alternate instructions.

We accept anonymous comments. All comments received will be posted without change to <http://www.regulations.gov> and will include any personal information you have provided. For more about privacy and the docket, visit <http://www.regulations.gov/privacynotice>.

Documents mentioned in this notice as being available in this docket and all public comments, will be in our online docket at <http://www.regulations.gov> and can be viewed by following that website's instructions. Additionally, if you go to the online docket and sign up for email alerts, you will be notified when comments are posted or a final rule is published.

Dated: April 23, 2018

Barry L. Dragon,

Director, Bridge Branch

Seventh Coast Guard District

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